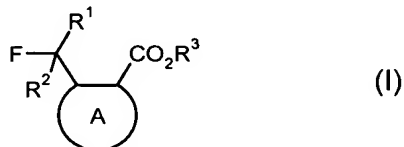


### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): A process for preparing fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycles of formula (I)



in which

R<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

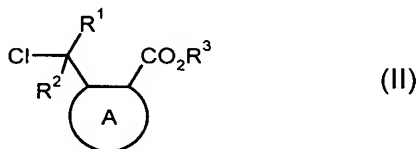
R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

R<sup>3</sup> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>-alkyl,

A is a 5-membered heterocycle selected from the group consisting of pyrazole that is substituted by R<sup>4</sup> in the 1-position, ~~thiazole that is substituted by R<sup>4</sup> in the 2-position,~~ and oxazole that is substituted by R<sup>4</sup> in the 2-position, and

R<sup>4</sup> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>-cycloalkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkylthio-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkoxy-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl, or phenyl;

comprising converting a chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II)



in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>3</sup>, and A are each as defined for formula (I),  
to a fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (I) in the presence of a fluorinating agent and optionally in the presence of a diluent.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein for the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II),

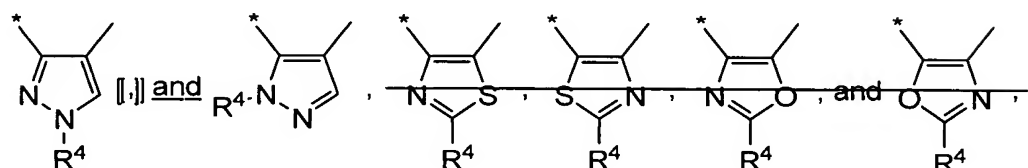
R<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

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R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

R<sup>3</sup> is C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl,

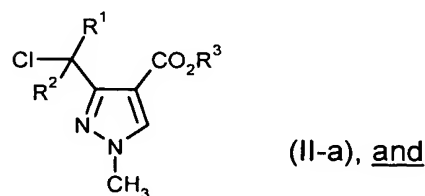
A is a 5-membered heterocycle selected from the group consisting of



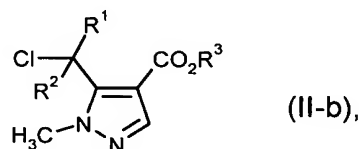
where in each case the bond marked by \* is joined to the -CClR<sup>1</sup>R<sup>2</sup> group and the other bond is joined to the CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>3</sup> ester group, and

R<sup>4</sup> is methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, cyclopropyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, or phenyl.

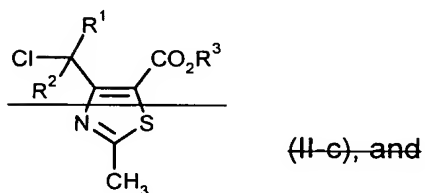
Claim 20 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II) is selected from the group consisting of compounds of formulas (II-a) [[.]] and (II-b) [[.]] ~~(II-c), and (II-d)~~



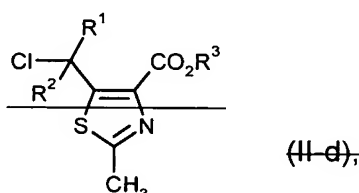
(II-a), and



(II-b),



~~(II-c), and~~



~~(II-d),~~

in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined in Claim 18.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 20 in which R<sup>1</sup> is chlorine, R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, and R<sup>3</sup> is methyl or ethyl.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is an alkali metal fluoride, cobalt(III) fluoride, halogen fluoride, anti-mony fluoride, molybdenum fluoride, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen fluoride/pyridine

mixture, a tertiary ammonium hydrofluoride, or a trialkylamine hydrofluoride of the formula  $n \text{ HF} / \text{N(Alk)}_3$  in which  $n$  is 1, 2, or 3, and Alk is  $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4\text{-alkyl}$ .

Claim 23 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is  $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N(Et)}_3$  (Franz reagent),  $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N(n-Bu)}_3$ , or  $\text{HF/pyridine}$  (Olah's reagent).

Claim 24 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is  $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N(Et)}_3$  (Franz reagent) or  $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N(n-Bu)}_3$ .

Claim 25 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 that it is carried out at a temperature of  $80^\circ\text{C}$  to  $170^\circ\text{C}$ .

Claim 26 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 that it is carried out at a temperature of  $120^\circ\text{C}$  to  $150^\circ\text{C}$ .

Claims 27-33 (canceled)